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DE RUEHJMA #0274 0401649
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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC0000
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000274

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR
WILLIAMS/SHAMPAINE/BELGRADE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/09/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [KHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE ERUPTS AT THE HARAM A-SHARIF/TEMPLE MOUNT

REF: A. JERUSALEM 266
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 252
[1](#)C. TEL AVIV 441

CLASSIFIED BY: CONSUL GENERAL JAKE WALLEES, PER REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) WORSHIPPERS AT AL AQSA MOSQUE AND ISRAELI POLICE CLASHED FOR SEVERAL HOURS ON THE HARAM A-SHARIF/TEMPLE MOUNT FEBRUARY 9. THE VIOLENCE BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER FRIDAY PRAYERS WHEN 200 ISRAELI POLICE ENTERED THE AREA AROUND AL AQSA MOSQUE. ISRAELI ACCOUNTS INDICATE THAT THE POLICE ACTION CAME IN RESPONSE TO STONES THROWN FROM THE AREA AROUND THE MOSQUE. WAQF ADMINISTRATOR ADNAN HUSSEINI THAT STONE-THROWING BY WORSHIPPERS TRIGGERED THE EVENT. LOCAL MEDIA REPORTED THAT 15 POLICE OFFICERS AND A NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS WERE LIGHTLY WOUNDED AND 17 PROTESTERS ARRESTED. WORSHIPPERS EXITED THE MOSQUE BY EARLY AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 9.

[1](#)2. (C) ACCORDING TO HUSSEINI, THE POLICE THREW TEAR GAS INTO THE MOSQUE, WHICH CONTAINED AS MANY AS 3500 WORSHIPPERS. POLICE INITIALLY WOULD NOT ALLOW THE WORSHIPPERS TO LEAVE THE MOSQUE, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED STONE-THROWERS WERE AMONG THEM. HUSSEINI SAID HE HAD PERSONALLY REFUSED TO LEAVE UNTIL ALL THE WORSHIPPERS WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE. RSO SPECIALIST, WHO WAS INSIDE THE MOSQUE DURING THE CLASHES, CONFIRMED THAT THE SITUATION WAS RESOLVED AND WORSHIPPERS DEPARTED BY EARLY AFTERNOON. HUSSEINI SUBSEQUENTLY CONTACTED POL SPECIALIST TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR U.S. SUPPORT AND EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN CALM.

[1](#)3. (C) THE VIOLENCE FOLLOWS THREE DAYS OF PROTEST OVER GOI EXCAVATIONS OF THE FORMER MUGHRABI GATE RAMP (REFTELS A, B) IN PREPARATION TO BUILD A NEW, LARGER RAMP. IN ADDITION TO THE CLASHES ON THE HARAM A-SHARIF/TEMPLE MOUNT, POST RECEIVED REPORTS OF ROCK THROWING AT DUNG GATE (THE OLD CITY GATE CLOSEST TO THE HARAM AL-SHARIF/TEMPLE MOUNT), AND SULTAN SULIEMAN STREET WAS TEMPORARILY CLOSED BY THE ISRAELI POLICE. THE REST OF THE CITY WAS GENERALLY QUIET, BUT THERE WERE REPORTS STONES THROWN IN HEBRON CITY CENTER AND AT THE QALANDIA CHECKPOINT, WHERE THE IDF RESPONDED WITH TEAR GAS AND RUBBER BULLETS. PEACEFUL MARCHES WERE HELD IN RAMALLAH, NABLUS, JENIN, BETHLEHEM, GAZA CITY, KHAN YOUNIS, AND RAFAH.

WALLEES